

Safety assessment is the process by which the CD worker determines whether a child is safe or likely to be harmed by abuse or neglect in the immediate future. The safety assessment tool in the CPS-1 and the CS-16 in conjunction with the CPS-1a, or the CS-16d, safety reassessment, provides a framework to assist the CD worker in managing variables involved in assessing the family and making the decision to leave the child at home or to place the child in out-of-home care.

Related Subject: Section 2 Chapter 5, 5.4 Assessment of Safety.

The standard must be that children should remain at home or be returned if the parents have reached, or can reach, the minimum sufficient level of physical and emotional nurturing. Another home is appropriate only when the child's situation in his own home has chronic inadequacies, which resist correction, and which are seriously detrimental to him physically or emotionally. The Children's Service Worker should ask, "If the child is returned, would I have concern for the child's welfare."

The objective of out-of-home care is not to "rescue" endangered children by automatically removing them from their home. The first priority is to maintain the family in crisis. Although there will be situations where immediate removal is not only justified but imperative, individuals working with families strive to keep families together when appropriate. If separation is necessary, the objective is to develop a plan to resolve the family's problems and return the child home quickly. If this is not possible, permanency must be obtained for the child.

NOTE: ASSESSMENT OF SAFETY BEGINS AT THE POINT A CA/N REPORT IS MADE AND PERMEATES THE ENTIRE FAMILY REUNIFICATION TREATMENT PROCESS. IN ORDER FOR THE FAMILY REUNIFICATION TREATMENT PROCESS TO BE EFFECTIVE, IT MUST CONSIDER SAFETY AND RISK THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE CASE LIFE.

Related Subject: Section 2, Chapter 5.5.4, Assessment of Safety, and Section 2, Chapter 5.5.5, Assessment of Risk.

Risk Assessment: The risk assessment is used only when there are children in the home. If children are removed from the home during the investigation/family assessment or from an on going FCS case, the use of the SDM safety and risk tools are suspended, unless at least one child remains in the home, or until the children are returned.

Factors in Recommending Placement

The following are factors to be considered when determining the need to make a referral to the juvenile court for removal of the child from the home.

As the Children's Service Worker reviews these factors in relation to the safety and well-being of the child(ren), consideration must also be given to culture, values, and traditions specific to the family.

- Is the child in immediate danger or living in hazardous conditions which cannot be immediately remedied and may result in serious bodily harm;
- Is a crisis situation occurring which results in temporary inability of parent(s) to give adequate care to the child;
- Do conditions of extreme physical, emotional neglect or abuse exist which cannot be immediately remedied or significantly reduced, or which can be expected to result in significant harm to child;
- Is the strength of parent/child relationship so poor that the parent is providing inadequate support and guidance to the child;
- Is the mental and/or physical capacity of the parent(s) of such a nature that improving parenting skills to a minimally acceptable level becomes an extensive time-consuming process which interferes in the child's normal growth and development? Are community resources non-existing which can substitute for or mediate that parent's care;
- Have all appropriate and available community/agency resources been offered to the family to prevent placement;
- Does the child have special needs which will not be met if the child remains with the parent(s) due to the parent's refusal to meet or give approval for the needs to be met;
- Do problems reoccur which affect the well-being of the child and interfere frequently with his/her growth and development;
- Has the parent(s) requested out-of-home care/placement? Does evaluation of this request confirm the plan to be appropriate; and
- Has the Division made the required "diligent and reasonable" efforts to maintain the child in his/her own home.

When determining if out-of-home care is appropriate, it is helpful for the Children's Service Worker to consider what can and cannot be accomplished by out-of-home placement:

<u>CAN</u>	<u>CAN'T</u>
1. Provide safety.	1. Solve family problems.
2. Provide shelter.	2. Provide stability and continuity for the family members.
3. Provide respite for families.	3. Help parents deal with special needs of the child because the child is not in the home.
4. Provide a family while child is awaiting legal release or termination of parental rights following abandonment.	4. Increase bonding to birth family.
5. Provide an opportunity to assess child without the family and vice versa.	
6. Provide a positive parenting experience for some children.	
7. Provide for more adequate stimulation in some cases of neglect.	

Survival, security, and growth are terms which can be used to differentiate levels of adequacy in a child's life experience and may be used to determine if a child can remain in the home. Survival refers to physical and emotional survival, staying alive. Security, the next essential ingredient in life, includes safety and belonging. Finally, when a child is alive and secure, the child's physical, intellectual, and emotional development may proceed and growth can occur. A continuum of survival, security, and growth helps to describe the quality of a child's life experience.

Survival

Security

Growth

Survival, of course, is the primary consideration and demands actions to resolve any threat to survival. Security issues can be serious, but whether they demand out-of-home care or require an alternative in-home plan will depend on how close they are to the survival end of the continuum. Growth includes a wide range of acceptable levels. If

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SECTION 4: OUT-OF-HOME CARE
CHAPTER 1: RECOMMENDING PLACEMENT
ATTACHMENT A: ASSESSMENT OF SAFETY AND RISK FACTORS IN
RECOMMENDING OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT
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PAGE: 4

growth is believed to be hampered, change may be advisable but perhaps debatable; change simply to enhance growth will be entirely voluntary.

It is strongly advised that individuals seek a consensus among multidisciplinary team members and/or family support team members as to what constitutes minimum sufficient levels of care. It is also recommended that parents participate in the definition of those levels. The boundaries of survival, security, and growth will assist in identifying whether specific children in their family home are experiencing minimum sufficient levels of care.

Related Subject: Section1, Chapter 4, Roles and Responsibilities of Community Partners.

MEMORANDA HISTORY: CS03-51